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INFO RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN 0009
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C O N F I D E N T I A L MONROVIA 000170

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [MASS](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [IZ](#) [LI](#)
SUBJECT: RECRUITERS FOR GUARD FORCE IN IRAQ CAUSE STIR IN
LIBERIA

REF: IIR 6 859 0077 09

Classified By: Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield for Reasons
1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) The Project Manager of Sabre International called on EmbOffs March 3 with two local sub-contractors to brief us on their efforts in Monrovia to recruit Liberians for armed static guard positions in Iraq. They said the recruitment was under the Theatre-Wide Internal Security Services program funded through the Joint Contracting Command Iraq and have done similar recruitment in other African countries, including Uganda. They expect to vet, recruit and train up to 250 Liberians for the posts. We believe they called on us after they received inquiries from the GOL wanting to know if the Embassy was sponsoring this effort. We have also been receiving calls from GOL officials, press and others asking for information on the operation, and responded that we were unaware of any American contractors recruiting for Iraq. The recruitment drive made the front page of at least one newspaper.

¶2. (C) We are extremely concerned about the procedures Sabre International has used to recruit the potential guards. The local subcontractors turn out to be a Taylor-era Special Security Service (SSS) agent as well as a member of the disbanded Anti-Terrorism Unit. (Note: Taylor's son Chucky Taylor was recently convicted in Florida for committing torture while head of the ATU.) The local assistants have rounded up ex-combatants from the ATU, the disbanded Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), the disbanded SSS, and from different war-era militias. We understand they have also approached members of the reconstituted AFL, reconstituted SSS and the police Emergency Response Unit, all of which have received U.S. assistance and training to maintain order in Liberia.

¶3. (C) EmbOffs expressed our grave concern that using ex-combatants and giving them skill sets superior to the AFL and police will be a threat to Liberia's security. They explained the extensive vetting procedures used by the AFL to weed out those who have committed egregious human rights violations, and doubted that a three-day vetting, even including polygraphing, would catch the problem ex-combatants.

¶4. (C) Following the conversation, EmbOffs informed various GOL officials that the Embassy was not aware of the recruitment and does not condone the activity as it is presently conceived. Ambassador raised the issue with President Sirleaf as well, who thought they were being recruited for non-lethal positions. We expect the GOL to require the contractors to suspend their operations. We understand from a press report dated November 2007 that a

similar operation in Namibia ended in the deportation of two Americans.

¶5. (C) A recruitment of Liberians would be possible under much tighter controls, using methods already developed by DynCorp for vetting the AFL and in cooperation with the Embassy. The contractors' activities so far has made our task more difficult, as many of those who have already been recruited were promised salaries as high as \$9,000 a month and will express their anger if the contracts do not materialize. The contractors' activities have also given credence to the canard we often hear that we are training the AFL for service in Iraq.

THOMAS-GREENFIELD